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ABSTRACT

Although many definitions of team teaching have been proposed since its inception in 1957, none so far seems adequate in describing its complex organizational makeup. Although each team teaching plan may have unique characteristics, certain organizational elements typical of team teaching plans can be identified. A team must have a minimum of two members and a maximum of eight or nine. Team members may have the joint responsibility for student learning experiences. Student groups may be composed of 25 to 200 students. Student grouping plans may specify large-group instruction, small-group discussion, or independent activities. Students may be grouped on the basis of achievement, potential, interest, or social considerations. Small teaching teams may be structured informally on an egalitarian or collegial basis, while larger teams may be more formally structured. Teams may be composed of members with complementary talents, interests, or competencies. Teaching teams may be either interdisciplinary or unidisciplinary. Members of the team may have different levels of responsibility such as those of master teacher, intern teacher, or teacher aide. Teacher education center teams may be composed of higher educational personnel, public school personnel, interns, or student teachers. Teacher education classroom teams may be composed of student teachers or interns and classroom teachers. (Author/JM)

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Harvey N. Sterns

Team Teaching: An Organizational Redefinition

The growth of the practice of team teaching has been well documented since the formative years of the Franklin School Team Project in 1957, especially at the elementary and secondary school levels, and has recently been identified as an innovative trend in teacher education programs.

A National Education Association Research Division report (1972) indicates that 43 percent of the public elementary schools were using some form of team teaching in 1971. This trend had been identified ten years earlier when 15 percent of the elementary schools were found to be practicing team teaching and 30 percent planned such use by 1966 (NEA, 1962).

At the secondary school level the same 1972 NEA Research Division report indicated that 35 percent of the public secondary schools were using team teaching practices in 1971. Earlier research reports indicated that team teaching was being practiced by 5 percent of the secondary schools in 1956, 12 percent in 1961, and that 31 percent planned such use by 1966 (NEA Research Division, 1967).

The use of team teaching at the teacher education level was apparently first identified as an innovative trend by Lanquis and others (1969) with the publication of their report on the Ohio Middle Elementary Teaching Team Program (METT) and further documented by Sterns (1972, 1976), Altman and Williams (1973), and Klausmeier and others (1976).

Hillson and Hyman (1971) maintain, however, that: "Even though the idea of team teaching has been widely approved, the term team teaching does not have a precise definition which is widely accepted (p. 108)." There have been, of course, a number of definitions available since 1960 which have attempted to provide descriptions of team teaching. Among the most important and useful of these statements are:

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Anderson (1960), closely associated with the Franklin School Project, offered this early attempt at definition:

> Team teaching is an emerging pattern of personnel utilization in the schools. Several teachers (e.g., 3 to 6 or 7) are organized into a "team" with the joint responsibility for the planning, execution, and evaluation of an education program for a large group of children (usually, the number of teachers multiplied by 25-30). The team pattern allows for greater flexibility in the assignment of teachers to tasks and in groupings of pupils for instructional purposes; differentiated groupings become possible for all subjects or aspects of a curriculum area, and wide variations are possible in the size of instructional groups (p. 1).

Brownell (1961), describing the Clarement Teaching Team Program, wrote:

> A Claremont Teaching Team is an instructional unit within a school. This unit is a combination of a distinct student group, a small faculty group with complementary talents and specializations which is responsible for the academic and counseling program of the student group, and certain auxiliary personnel who assist the teachers and students (p. 6).

Heller (1963), representing the Educational Research Council of Greater Cleveland, differentiated between team teaching and staff utilization:

> TEAM TEACHING exists when two or more teachers regularly, purposefully, and deliberately work co-operatively in the PLANNING, the PRESENTING, and the EVALUATING of learning experiences.
>
> STAFF UTILIZATION is a regular, purposeful, and deliberate series of opportunities wherein teachers can employ their special talents as part of the team effort (p. 1).

Shaplin (1965), co-editor of the definitive book on team teaching and Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education during the Franklin School Team Project, credits Robert Anderson as recommending that the generic term "cooperative teaching" be applied to the various forms of teacher cooperation and collaboration including team teaching. Shaplin's (1964) definition was:

> Team teaching is a type of instructional organization, involving teaching personnel and the students assigned to them, in which two or more teachers are given responsibility, working together, for all or a significant part of the instruction of the same group of students (p. 15).

Goodlad (1965), collaborator with Anderson on research on nongraded and team teaching organizations, defined the cooperative team teaching concept as:

> Cooperative teaching is a process wherein two or more persons, not necessarily of the same professional status, share in planning any segment or, conceivably, all of the learning opportunities for a specified group of students and in carrying out their joint plans (p. 11).

Trump (1968), long associated with the Commission on the Experimental Study of the Utilization of the Staff in the Secondary School, wrote:

> The term "team teaching" applies to an arrangement in which two or more teachers and their assistants, taking advantage of their respective competencies, plan, instruct, and evaluate in one or more subject areas a group of elementary or secondary students equivalent in size to two or more conventional classes, using a variety of technical aids to teaching and learning through large group instruction, small group discussions, and independent study (p. 318).

Lanquis and others (1969), commenting on the Ohio Middle Elementary Teaching Team (METT) program based on teams composed of four student teachers, wrote:

> The keynote of the program is teamwork. Public school teachers, principals, and supervisory personnel, together with university faculty, meet regularly and function as a clinical teacher education team, sharing responsibility for the design, guidance, implementation, and evaluation of the program (p. 809).

Altman and Williams (1973), describing the Wisconsin-LaCrosse, Micro-Team Teaching program, define the micro-team teacher as:

> . . .Either a cooperating teacher or student teacher who cooperatively plans for a group of children. The micro-team teacher is part of a micro-team which is a scaled down team teaching operation usually taking place in a single self-contained classroom with two student teachers and one cooperating teacher (p. vi).

Anderson (1976) credits the current Individually Guided Education (IGE) concept as having originated in the team teaching programs of the late 1950's and early 1960's. Klausmeier (1976), director of the IGE Teacher Education Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, describes the system as including one student teacher or intern assigned to a nongraded Instruction and Research (I & R) unit which ". . . involves cooperative team teaching and multiage grouping of students

and replaces both the aggraded, self-contained classroom and the departmentalized form of organization for instruction (p. 199)." The unit includes a unit or team leader, three to five staff teachers, instructional and clerical aides and 100-150 students.

None of these definitions, apparently, is really adequate in describing the complex organizational concept of team teaching. It may be that an all-inclusive comprehensive definition is simply not possible because each team teaching organizational plan tends to incorporate unique characteristics dependent upon personnel utilized and the local instructional situation. There are, however, certain organizational elements which are common to and characteristic of the many diverse elementary, secondary and teacher education team teaching plans in operation. These common organizational elements, which may serve as the basis for a redefinition of team teaching, can be expressed as follows:

1. Common to all team teaching organizational plans is the provision that a minimum of two members: teachers, paraprofessionals, student teachers, interns, are involved. The maximum number of team members may be eight or nine.

2. Team members may have the joint responsibility to cooperatively plan, prepare, present and evaluate the learning experiences for a group of students on a regular basis.

3. Student groups or learning teams may be composed of a single class group of 25-30 or larger groups of up to 200 students.

4. Student grouping plans may provide for large-group instruction, small-group discussion and independent study activities.

5. Student groups of whatever size may be grouped and regrouped for instructional purposes on the bases of achievement, potential, interest and social considerations.

6. Small teaching teams of two or three members may be structured on a collegial or equalitarian basis with no formal organization and with shared leadership and decision-making responsibilities.

7. Large teaching teams of three or more members may be somewhat formally structured with one individual identified as the team or unit leader.

8. Teaching teams may be composed of members with compelementary talents, interests and special competencies as in the staff utilization concept.

9. Teaching teams may be composed of specialists representing different subject matter areas or disciplines as in an interdisciplinary team. Unidisciplinary teams may be formed with those in the same subject matter area or grade level.

10. Teaching teams may be organized on a differentiated staffing basis with several levels of position responsibility such as master teacher, senior teacher, staff teacher, associate teacher and intern teacher with various levels of para-professionals such as teacher aides and clerks in a formal hierarchical structure.

11. Teacher education center teams may be composed of higher education personnel: professors and supervisors; public school personnel: cooperating teachers and other professionals, and interns or student teachers as in a student teacher center model.

12. Teacher education classroom teams may be composed of one or more student teachers or interns and one or more classroom teachers.

It should be obvious that a given team teaching program might contain several of these common organizational elements. The Wisconsin-LaCrosse model, for example, appears to incorporate at least seven such components and may be described more precisely as incorporating an elementary teacher education classroom or micro-team composed of two student teachers and one cooperating or master teacher who cooperatively offer guidance, plan, present and evaluate an instructional program for a self-contained class of 28-30 students utilizing small-group instruction within the classroom and large-group instruction with the macro-team of four student teachers, two master teachers and up to 60 children. College supervisors and school principals are considered as part of the teacher education center or clinical mooel.

It should also be obvious that such an organizational description or definition does not deal with the instructional purposes or objectives of a given team teaching program which may be concerned with three levels of endeavor: in-service education for teachers, pre-service education for student teachers and the instructional program for the students involved. Once the organizational components of a given team teaching plan have been ascertained, one should then proceed with the more important and difficult task of determining how the particular organizational features of that plan contribute to the improvement of instruction for teachers, student teachers and students.

It may be that future investigators of team teaching programs should concentrate on the benefits to pre-service and in-service teachers as the majority of studies reported to date (Martin & Pavan, 1976; Armstrong, 1977) concerning student achievement in team teaching organizations at both the elementary and secondary levels have not demonstrated significant gains for students participating in team teaching programs.

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